

Afterthoughts

- Yocheved Bienenfeld

KORACH'S SIN

It is well known that Korach's sin was machloket. He was the cause of the highest level of machloket during the travels of the Jews in the desert. And what is wrong with machloket? Obviously, it is because it makes shalom impossible. Aside from the obvious, a lack of shalom implies a distancing from HaKadosh Baruch Hu. One of Gd's names is 'Shalom': And so said Chazal in Shabbat 10b - the name of HaShem is 'Shalom'. The implication, then, is that there cannot be true peace among men without recognizing that it is HaShem Who unifies everything in the world into a working whole. All created beings are to join in some way to perfect, to make creation complete.

The value of shalom is so crucial to HaShem that we are taught that He forgoes His own honor for its sake. Boaz was permitted to institute the greeting of everyone B'SHEM HASHEM, with Gd's name, in order to increase the sense of shalom among them, as the Malbim brings: "...when Boaz became a judge, he established (this practice)... to instill in their hearts that HaShem is looking down upon them and their welfare from the heavens... so that HaShem, who is called 'perfect' (SHALEM), participates in the peace between man and his friend and this would arouse in them the

awareness that He is always present in matters between men seeking their good and peace." (Ruth 2:4)

The Torah also relates how HaShem permitted His name to be "erased" in the process of the Sotah so that it would lead to shalom bayit. For, in essence, erasing His name, resulted in actually increasing His name, "writing" it again, so to speak, by increasing shalom.

Korach's sin was that through machloket, he prevented the Shechina from resting upon Israel. In his argument to Moshe, he states "... for the entire assembly, all of them, are holy and HaShem is among them so why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of HaShem? (Bamidbar 16:3). In so doing, he is, in essence, denying the concept of varying levels, differences among the people. Only when a person can recognize that a people is made up of individuals with varying abilities and qualities, can he recognize that we need each other to succeed in achieving what we need to achieve and, thus, to be complete. If everyone is "equal" and a person feels independent, complete, that his completion doesn't depend upon anyone else, then he destroys the power that ties one to K'lal Yisrael and, thus, to Hashem. As Rav Mordechai Shapiro zt"l says, 'the source of machloket is ego' (Mima'amakim, Bamidbar p.153-266) - I can do it all, I don't need anyone else, because Gd made me great.

Basically, we refer to this idea and - if we

are paying attention - we say it every time we say the blessing of BOREH NEFASHOT RABOT V'CHESRONAN. This blessing clearly states that we are created incomplete and we would necessarily have to rely on others for our own attempt at perfection. And this connection of people, the realization that 'I am not self-sufficient' and I need others is what leads us to L'HACHAYOT BAHEM NEFESH KOL CHAI - to achieve that tie to SH'LEIMUT, to the ultimate source of all shalom, to Hashem, and thus achieve "life" in this world and the next. ❀